

# Letters to the Editor

## Transsexual Surgery Not Advised

To the Editor:

As a psychiatrist I am alarmed at the growing number of purported transsexuals who are receiving surgical transformations. Although I have heard no 'authority' state such, my observations lead me to conclude that the major psychological problem of transsexuals which differentiates them from true homosexuals is the presence of a central delusion around which the rest of their lives is based.

To believe that one is a "woman trapped inside a man's body" is no less a delusion than is the delusion of being Jesus Christ. It is interesting, though disturbing, that physicians will give credence to the former and yet eagerly work toward psychiatric treatment of the latter.

Several years ago, before all the publicity about transsexualism I had a female patient who would now be classified as transsexual. Treating her as a person with gender identity problems and a delusion resulted in her acceptance of her femininity.

I implore my medical colleagues to re-evaluate the current stance regarding transsexuals. Psychotherapy will not be easy for these people but it can work. Delusions should not be surgically managed.

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## Center for Disease Control

To the Editor:

Your editorial in the *Journal of the National Medical Association* has come to my attention and I would like to thank you for the flattering comments you made about the Center for Disease Control.

I was very proud to have been as-

sociated with the Center for 17 years and agree wholeheartedly with you that the organization is composed of a staff of very dedicated, hard-working public servants. The past year has seen considerable misinterpretation of the activities of the Center and it is gratifying to sense the tone of your editorial. In these days when it is so easy to criticize, one who commends needs commendation himself.

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## Legionnaire's Disease

To the Editor:

Your editorials in *JNMA* are usually both entertaining and informative, and I regularly read them, particularly when they deal with topics relative to laboratories. A recent editorial concerning the "legionnaire's disease" is no exception, but a few comments prompt me to write.

Although you appropriately praise the stubborn efforts that led to the identification of a bacteria-like agent that may be responsible for this unusual syndrome, I wondered if an equally important lesson of the investigations was the rather poor epidemiologic approach the investigators demonstrated. Although the initial diagnosis pursued was that of a toxic respiratory injury, the CDC failed to provide for the preservation of sputum, urine, or any other body fluids during the most acute stage of the disease. There are many who are still skeptical of the proposed etiologic agent and wonder at the rather rapid dissemination of the disease through the group of legionnaires, a phenomenon quite unusual, as you know, in most infectious conditions. Indeed many others are skeptical of even the thought of a new infectious disease, recognizing well that most of the "new" diseases are environmental or industrial in their etiology. There is no doubt that the CDC is well equipped and well directed for the intensive study of infectious agents and this aspect of the research was certainly carried out as well as it could be.

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